

26 November 1986

SECRET ARMS SALES TO ALLIES ARE EFFECTIVE TOOL, CIA OFFICIAL SAYS
By WILLIAM M. WELCH
WASHINGTON D.C.

The United States should be able to sell arms to its friends more quickly and "without hanging out all their dirty linen for the world to see," the No. 2 official at the CIA says.

A ~~Robert M. Gates~~, deputy director of central intelligence, did not mention the Reagan administration's secret military weapons deal to Iran, the disclosure of which touched off an uproar and triggered the resignation of the national security adviser on Tuesday and the firing of his deputy.

In a speech in San Francisco, however, Gates said expedited and discreet military sales was one of several steps the United States should take to oppose the Soviet Union's support of terrorism and its strategic offensive in the Third World.

"We need to change our approach to foreign military sales so that the United States can provide arms more quickly to our friends in need _ provide them the tools to do the job _ and to do so without hanging out all their dirty linen for the world to see," Gates said. "It does not serve any rational purpose to humiliate those whom we would help." Gates said the United States should continue to use covert action "to create problems for hostile governments and to provide discreet help to friendly organizations and governments. Indeed, at times it may be the only means we have to help them." In a second San Francisco address, he said the Soviet Union is laying the foundation for developing a rapidly deployable nationwide anti-ballistic missile system.

He said the CIA estimates that over the past 10 years the Soviets have spent nearly \$150 billion on strategic defense, almost 15 times what the United States has spent.

Gates made his remarks in speeches to the Commonwealth Club of California and the World Affairs Council of Northern California. Copies were made available in Washington by the CIA.

He has held the No. 2 job at the Central Intelligence Agency since April. He previously was deputy director for intelligence.

He said that throughout the Third World the Soviet Union has played a "pervasively destructive role," directly and through its client states. He said that over the past 10 years the Soviets have incited violence and disorder and sponsored subversion of neutral or pro-Western governments in dozens of countries, including El Salvador, Honduras, the Caribbean, South Korea and Pakistan.

Afghanistan, he said, underscores both "the full measure of Soviet ambitions in the Third World," and also new difficulties the Soviets face. More than 100,000 Soviet troops are in Afghanistan.

"A new phenomenon that Soviets have faced in recent years is that they find themselves on the defensive, supporting high cost, long-term efforts to maintain in power repressive regimes they have installed or co-opted in Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Mozambique, South Yemen and Nicaragua," he said.

Continued

He said an "umbrella of Soviet support" allows large-scale terrorist operations.

"Let there be no mistake or ambiguity about it: the Soviet Union supports terrorism," he said. "Nearly every terrorist group in the Middle East has links to the U.S.S.R. or one of its clients." Gates offered his remarks about Soviet strategic defense as an argument for continued research and development of the "Star Wars" nuclear defense system proposed by Reagan.

He said the Soviets have upgraded the operational ballistic missile defense system installed around Moscow to the limits allowed by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

In addition, he said, the Soviets are taking steps that would permit widespread deployment of anti-ballistic missiles, and have pursued advanced technologies for strategic defense, such as laser, particle beam, kinetic energy and microwave technology.

"Taken together, all of the Soviet Union's ABM and ABM-related activities are more significant and more ominous than any one considered individually," Gates said. "Cumulatively, they suggest that the U.S.S.R. may be preparing an ABM defense of its national territory."